

# NOT YOUR USUAL DESK STRETCHES

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**WALK THE TALK  
SAFETY MATTERS**



These days, almost everyone has seen the typical desk stretches to help you maintain blood flow and prevent you from feeling tired and sore. Since the 80's, you've been told to stretch the side of your neck, the front of your shoulders... you'd be forgiven for getting bored. Desk work has a lot to answer for, however. The movement and postural patterns you develop at a desk are reinforced over and over; 8hrs a day, 5 days a week. Except perhaps for your sleeping position, there's no other posture that has such potential to create and maintain dysfunction. Perhaps it's time to try something new....



# Spirit fingers

## How to do it:

- a. Bend your elbow with your hand in front, as if you might be ready to shake someone's hand.
- b. Tuck your elbows in to your sides and rotate your forearms outward, away from your body
- c. Splay the fingers and shake the fingers and hands back and forth for 5 seconds
- d. Repeat 3 times

## Why does it help?

This stretch opens the pectoral (chest) region, lengthening the space between your shoulders that you might be shortening into a hunch. The hand movement allows you to 'shake out' the tension in your hands and forearm muscles from constant typing.



# Ewww

## How to do it:

- a. Imagine you have seen something disgusting. Pull your head and jaw backwards as if to say “ewww”. Hold for 5 seconds
- b. Repeat 3 times

## Why does it help?

The anterior cervical (neck) muscles are lengthened during this stretch, targeting a group of muscles that are often shortened by pushing our head forward towards the computer. It also ‘switches on’ the posterior cervical (neck) and upper thoracic (upper back) muscles that lengthen while we stay in our computer (or iPhone) stoop.



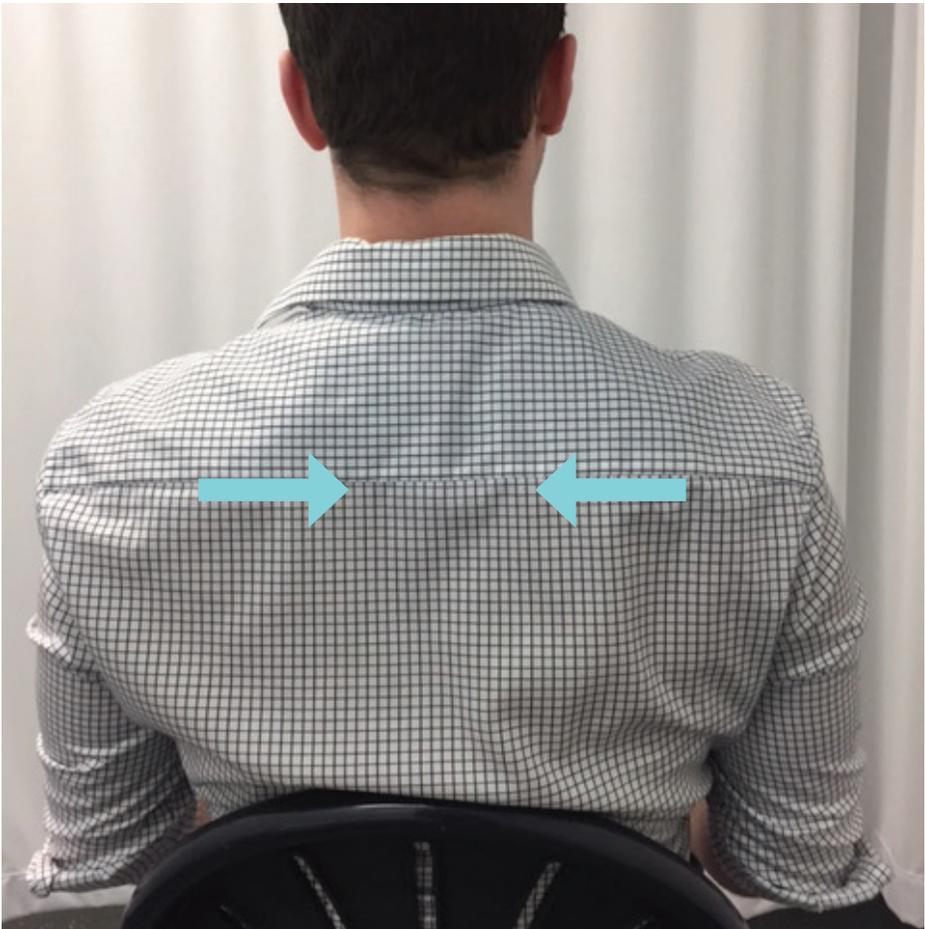
# The pencil grab

## How to do it:

- Keep your arms in an elbow-bent but relaxed position
- Imagine that you have a pencil between your shoulder blades and you want to grab it. Bring your shoulder blades back towards each other, trying to move them as close together as possible.
- Squeeze firmly and release.
- Repeat 3 times

## Why does it help?

The mid-thoracic region of your back (the upper back) is generally rounded while you're at your desk. Even if you have a fantastic posture, your arms are constantly reaching forward towards the keyboard and mouse, creating at least a little rounding. This stretch causes these lengthened muscles to contract, reminding them to hold your posture a little straighter.



# The look

## How to do it:

- Look up at the very top left of your field of vision (without turning your head). Hold for 3 seconds
- Look up at the very top right of your field of vision. Hold for 3 seconds
- Look down at the bottom right, holding for 3 seconds
- Look down to the bottom left, holding for 3 seconds

## Why does it help?

This provides your eyes with a small rest from continual screen time, focusing on small detail. Eye strain is really just 'focusing fatigue'. Looking away for a short while allows the muscles to rest and relax before refocusing.



# Horseriding

## How to do it:

- a. Sit with your feet flat on the floor, sitting up straight
- b. Squeeze your buttocks together tightly; you should raise up in your chair by about a centimetre as your gluteal (butt) muscles contract. Hold for 3 seconds.
- c. Squeeze on and off 10 times. You should raise up and down in your chair as if you're horseriding. Try doing this every time you're waiting for a webpage to load!
- d. Repeat 3 times, with 10 seconds of rest in between each set

## Why does it help?

Think of this as the squat that takes you nowhere. The gluteal (butt) muscles are lengthened and inactive when sitting in a chair. This activity allows you to “wake up” your gluteals, and you'll be more likely to activate them correctly when you do get up and moving. Many people's gluteal muscles have had such disuse that they can't effectively contract them voluntarily.

